

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a calcined zirconia extrudate comprising zirconium and one or more elements selected from the group consisting of Groups IB, IIB, IIIB, IVB, VB, VIB, VIIB, VIII of the Periodic Table of Elements, lanthanides and actinides, comprising the steps of:

- a. preparing a shapable dough which comprises mixing and kneading a particulate zirconia and a source of said one or more elements with a solvent to obtain a mixture having a total solids content of from about ~~50%~~65% to about ~~85%~~75% by weight,
- b. extruding the shapable dough to form a zirconia extrudate comprising zirconium and said one or more elements, and
- c. drying and calcining the zirconia extrudate;

wherein the particulate zirconia comprises no more than about 15% by weight of zirconia which is other than monoclinic zirconia.

2. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a calcined cobalt/zirconia extrudate comprising the steps of:

- a. preparing a shapable dough which comprises mixing and kneading a particulate zirconia and a cobalt precursor with a solvent to obtain a mixture having a solids content of from about ~~50%~~65% to about ~~85%~~75% by weight,
- b. extruding the shapable dough to form a zirconia/extrudate, and
- c. drying and calcining the zirconia/cobalt extrudate;

wherein the particulate zirconia comprises no more than about 15% by weight of zirconia which is other than monoclinic zirconia.

3. (Original) A process according to Claim 2 wherein the cobalt precursor is selected from the group consisting of cobalt hydroxide, cobalt acetate, cobalt nitrate, cobalt oxide and mixtures thereof.

4. (Original) A process according to Claim 3 wherein the cobalt precursor is cobalt hydroxide.

Claims 5-6 (Canceled).

7. (Original) A process according to Claim 1 wherein the particulate zirconia comprises no more than about 10% by weight of zirconia which is other than monoclinic zirconia.

Claims 8-9 (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a calcined cobalt-impregnated zirconia extrudate which comprises the steps of:

- a. preparing a shapable dough which comprises mixing and kneading a particulate zirconia with a solvent to obtain a mixture having a total solids content of from about ~~50%~~65% to about ~~85%~~75% by weight,
- b. extruding the shapable dough to form a zirconia extrudate,
- c. impregnating the zirconia extrudate with a liquid cobalt precursor to form a cobalt-impregnated zirconia extrudate, and
- d. drying and calcining the cobalt-impregnated zirconia extrudate;

wherein the particulate zirconia comprises no more than about 15% by weight of zirconia which is other than monoclinic zirconia.

11. (Original) A process according to Claim 10 wherein the liquid cobalt precursor is an aqueous solution of a cobalt salt selected from the group consisting of cobalt nitrate, cobalt acetate, cobalt hydroxide, and mixtures thereof.

Claims 12-25 (Canceled).